

HB-6355 An Act Concerning Risk Protection Orders or Warrants

Honorary Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I write today as a Nurse and Clinical Social Worker with more than thirty years experience in psychiatry working with clinically depressed clients. Mental illness, and particularly mood disorders, are severe conditions which cause severe emotional pain and despair. They also often result in psychosis or other forms of cognitive impairment. *The depressed person is more likely to take their own life if they have the availability of firearms or the opportunity to purchase them.* This is supported by the research. As a clinician, I have had to involve the police in protecting clients from themselves. I believe that expanding this bill, to allow family members and health care professionals to petition the court, is an essential measure of protection for those at imminent risk. I also strongly believe that the legislation should prevent the return of firearms to the individual without a hearing. I urge you to give full support to this bill, which is not intended to restrict a person's life, but to save it, at a time when they are not competent to protect themselves.

Thank you for your consideration,
Claire M. Walsh
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